

THE ALLIANCE AND POLITICS.

BRETHREN: Many eyes are upon us. Let us deport ourselves like men—like politic men, if you please like politicians; that is "with an eye to the main chance" in the promotion of our cause. Will the interests of the Order be subserved by forming a political party? I think not. It is a violation of one of the cardinal principles of our Order. Have we not resolved "to labor for the education of the agricultural classes in the science of economical government in a strictly non-partisan spirit?" Have we not each of us been assured by the officer who initiated us into the Alliance that the duties of an alliance man would not conflict with our political or religious views? How many of us as organizing officers have given the brethren this assurance. Is not this the principle that actuates the brotherhood in every state in the Union? Instead of asking, is it not? I will say emphatically it is. Every paper from our national organ down, including those that speak with authority for the alliance of their respective states as far as I have read are unequivocally opposed to an alliance political party. All of you who were at the Meriden mass meeting last spring doubtless remember the fiery words of McDowell when he told you how the Alliance and wheel of his state had conquered with out a political party. Who is McDowell? The state lecturer and publisher of the state organ of Tennessee, *The Dakota Ruralist*—the organ for the Alliance in South Dakota, says: "At the alliance convention held in Huron last June it was wisely decided that our work should be done within the respective parties; and the result of last week's Republican state convention must be in every way satisfactory to the true alliance man." In that young state where they have the best alliance organization of any northern state our folks have driven the republican party to take a step in advance of even Kansas on the prohibition question by declaring for both state and national prohibition, this being an alliance article of faith out there and they are going to make the republicans, the dominant party elect one if not two alliance men to the United States senate and two men satisfactory to the alliance to congress besides state representatives.

Brethren, let us have but one plank in our platform; principles before party and men above platform—this with all it implies. Let us resolve that we will support no man or any platform that is not an embodiment of our principles. If we will inculcate this grand principle in our sub-alliances and do our duty as men, at the primaries we can dominate this state as completely as the whiskey men dominate the middle and eastern states—and on the other hand with an organization of our own we will be as completely at the mercy of the other parties as is the prohibition party of to-day grand as are their principles. Without a political organization we have both the other parties by the nape of the neck. If we organize a party either of the other parties will have us by the seat of the breeches. If we work within the old parties they will have but honeyed words for us; if we do not we will, from their point of view, all be shyster office-seekers. So much as to the political rewards and penalties. What will be the effect on our organization—the effect of this party organization can but be bad and only bad. What can we do either with or without a party organization if we do not have the mass of the farmers and laborers of our country and state inside the alliance? and does not every observing alliance man know that the great obstacle to organization to-day, is the fear with out-siders that we are working some political scheme? This is not a mere opinion of mine—it is the verdict of

every organizer I have talked with. Let us all act in harmony with and endeavor to promote unity among our members instead of bringing into our Order disturbing elements that to say the least are of doubtful utility.

J. F. TRUE.

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In accordance with our policy which recognizes the unquestionable right of all parties, to be heard in defense of their honest opinions, we cheerfully give place to the communication of Bro. J. F. True upon the above subject. If his reasoning is sound, and will stand the test, then must his conclusions prevail. If however, his premises are unsound or his reasoning illogical he cannot expect his conclusions to be accepted. Let us examine his article, and see of what material it is composed.

We are willing to grant Bro. True the full force of his objection by admitting for the sake of argument, that the contemplated movement would ultimately result in the development of a full fledged new party. He then declares that "it is a violation of one of the Cardinal principles of our Order;" and he quotes the first declaration as the one that would be thus violated: That we have resolved "to labor for the education of the Agricultural classes in the science of economical government, in a strictly non-partisan spirit." By what rule of interpretation this resolution can be made to conflict with the organization of a new party is not clear, and Bro. True makes no attempt to make it so. He simply takes it for granted and asks every one to accept his decision without question. We believe the reverse of this to be true and we do not ask any one to accept our opinion unless we can prove it.

Toward the close of his article Bro. True strongly urges the policy of adherence to old parties and the promotion of Alliance principles through them. He says if we do this they "will have but honeyed words for us." We would suggest that this is all they have had for us during the past twenty-five years, until the agricultural and laboring classes have had a surfeit of honeyed words and now desire a change of diet. Taffy is cheap even at trust prices, but it makes poor diet if not accompanied by other and more essential elements of nutrition. If we were to ask Bro. True through which one of the old parties he would propose to accomplish the purposes of the Alliance, being a republican he would undoubtedly answer that it should be done through that party. Were we to ask some of our democratic members of the Alliance the same question, they would undoubtedly answer, through the democratic party. We very much doubt if Bro. True, with all his well known liberality could be made to repose sufficient confidence in the democratic party, by any pledges it might make, to induce him to vote the democratic ticket, and if this be true how much less could the old "crossback" democrat be expected to come over and vote the republican ticket. Adherence to the old parties, then, under any and all circumstances, simply means a continuance of the division of our membership on the old lines, precisely as

they have been divided before they became members of the Order. Is this the method "to educate the agricultural classes in a strictly non-partisan spirit?" It would seem rather like educating them in a strictly partisan spirit.

What are we to understand by the "education of the agricultural classes, in the science of economical government, in a strictly non-partisan spirit?" Let us analyze this proposition and see if we cannot settle this dispute as to its meaning. What is government? It may be defined, in brief as the "administration of public affairs, according to established constitutional laws, and usages," for the protection of individual rights and the restraint of wrong doing. Economical government then would imply such "administration of public affairs for the purposes in view, in an economical manner, or without unnecessary or extravagant expense." Science is defined as "knowledge, or certain knowledge; the comprehension or understanding of truth or facts by the mind." Hence when we "resolve to educate the agricultural classes, in the science of economical government we resolve to educate them to a knowledge, a comprehension, an intelligent understanding of the method of administering public affairs for the promotion of individual rights and the restraint of wrong doing without unnecessary expense; and in doing this in a strictly non-partisan spirit, we are to educate them to ignore party, to rise above it, to advance to a higher and nobler plane of life than that upon which the foundations of parties rest. We must learn to forget our partisanship, and remember only that we are citizens of a common country with common interests, a common purpose and a common destiny. The old parties have been tried in the years that are past and found wanting. They have made pledges during every political campaign, only to be broken after election. The circulating medium has been contracted until it is insufficient for the business of the country. Senator Plumb in his place in the U. S. Senate March 27, 1888, said, "that during the last three years preceeding that date, the volume of the money of the country has been contracted five per cent, which contraction, he stated, had reduced the cash value of property in this country three billions of dollars," an amount greater than the National debt at the close of the war. This contraction of currency is in pursuance of a preconceived purpose, as announced in the infamous Hazard Circular, and the scheme has been abetted and faithfully sustained by necessary legislation by these old parties. The Civil service laws are ignored by those intrusted with their execution. The markets of agricultural products are manipulated by speculators and gamblers. Labor is half employed at starvation prices. Trusts and combinations monopolize the products of every industry, and impose extortionate tribute upon every necessity of life. The burden of taxation rests most heavily upon the poor whose possessions are visible and who are not expert in methods of escape. The common people are being ground down, but surely reduced to

the condition proposed for them by the Hazard Circular, while the rich repose serenely in the lap of luxury and ease. The legislation under which these conditions have been born and nurtured is the work of the old parties, and yet we are told that it is a violation of our principles to depart from them. If this be true, then our principles need revision.

Bro. True lays great stress upon the fact that we were assured that the Alliance would not attempt to interfere with our religious and political rights and privileges. This is true, and never more so than at the present time. But while it does not propose to interfere with those rights it does propose to educate its members out of their partisanship, instruct them in the principles of higher and nobler and purer politics, and possibly a more liberal religion.

The Brother has not read anything from any of the authorities in the Alliance favoring a new party; hence he concludes, hastily, we think, that it would be wrong on this account. Every locality is likely to be governed by prevailing conditions and existing necessities, and it may require more time, and a longer endurance of the policy of the old parties to convince the entire membership of the necessity of independent action. The sentiment is rapidly growing in that direction however, in all parts of the country, both north and south, as we could show if we had space to quote from the Alliance press. We happen to know that in several counties of our own State this new departure has been taken. In Cowley county the Alliance delegates went into the republican convention, and attempted to secure a recognition of their rights by the representatives of that party. They were promptly squelched, so promptly, in fact that an insurrection was imminent, and was only averted by prompt action of leading and influential men. As our information of this affair is from private sources we are not at liberty to give it in detail at this time, but the members of the Alliance in Cowley county have a ticket and it was not put in nomination by either of "the old parties." It seems that if such action "is a violation of a fundamental principle of our Order" as Bro. True states, then our members in Cowley county, including our worthy and most esteemed State President, are subject to discipline for such violation. The same is true in Harvey, and several other counties of our State.

Every man who has studied the conditions of the agricultural and laboring classes, and the causes that have brought about these conditions recognizes the fact that if a change is ever effected it must be by political methods. This is generally conceded by men both in and out of the Alliance. If this be true, what can the Alliance hope to accomplish except by active participation in politics? And how can anything be hoped for through political methods unless the members vote together? And how can members be expected to vote together if the old party lines continue to be drawn, and thereby old prejudices and animosities be perpetuated? We join with Bro. True in the in-